

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01455 01 OF 02 311353Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6096

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 1455

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E.O.11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR CH US

SUBJECT: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE "CHANG CHUN-CHIAO LINE"

REF: PEKING 1429

1. WE OFFER SOME THOUGHTS ON (A) THE MESSAGE PEKING CURRENTLY IS TRYING TO SEND TO AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERS (AND PRE-SUMABLY A WIDER AUDIENCE) AND ITS VERY TROUBLESOME IMPLICATIONS; (B) PEKING'S MOTIVES; (C) A POSSIBLE US RESPONSE.

2. AMERICANS, AND ANY OTHERS (THE SOVIETS AND THE FOLKS ON TAIWAN INCLUDED) WHO RECEIVE A REASONABLE ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S REMARKS TO SENATOR SCOTT AND WANG HAI-JUNG'S TO THE CONGRESSIONAL STAFFDEL CAN SUM UP/INTERPRET THE CURRENT LINE AS FOLLOWS:

-- THE PRC AND THE US CONTINUE TO HAVE MANY POINTS IN COMMON (ESSENTIALLY, SHARED CONCERNS VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION) IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. OUR RELATIONSHIP ON THAT BASIS HAS A LOT GOING FOR IT.

-- NORMALIZATION IS ANOTHER MATTER, HOWEVER. FOR THAT, THE US WILL HAVE TO REMOVE ITSELF FROM INVOLVEMENT IN CHINA'S INTERNAL AFFAIR, THE TAIWAN PROBLEM, BY COMPLYING WITH THE THREE CONDITIONS. MEANWHILE EXCEPT, AT BEST, ABOUT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF BILATERAL DEALINGS.

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PAGE 02 PEKING 01455 01 OF 02 311353Z

(SO FAR, POINTS THAT ARE FAIRLY FAMILIAR TO A WIDE

AUDIENCE, BUT WHAT COMES NEXT IS NOT SO FAMILIAR.)

-- WHILE CHINA HAS BEEN PATIENT, AND CERTAINLY STILL WANTS NORMALIZATION (ON ITS TERMS), IT IS NOW BECOMING IMPATIENT TO COLLECT THE "DEBT" THE US OWES IT.

-- AT ANY RATE, THE MESSAGE TO US GOES ON, CHINA IS GETTING READY TO SOLVE THE TAIWAN PROBLEM BY FORCE, PROBABLY THE ONLY WAY THE JOB CAN BE DONE. CHINA NATURALLY DOES NOT SAY HOW LONG THESE PREPARATIONS WILL TAKE, BUT SOONER OR LATER, IF CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE, THE PLA WILL LIBERATE TAIWAN -- NOTWITHSTANDING THE US SECURITY COMMITMENT (IF BY THEN THE US SHOULD BE SO UNWISE AS TO STILL HAVE ONE). THUS THE COMMON INTERESTS WE HAVE INTERNATIONALLY ARE NOT DETERRING PEKING FROM FINISHING THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR. (FOR THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE AWARE OF THE GRADUAL INCREMENT IN PRC MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT AREA, AND/OR AWARE OF CHANG'S REMARKS ABOUT THE CURRENT EXERCISES, THIS POINT TAKES ON JUST A BIT MORE PLAUSIBILITY. WHICH IS, WE SUPPOSE, ONE FUNCTION OF THESE ACTIVITIES.)

3. WE FEAR THAT WANG'S SO CLEARLY TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO GIVE THE CONGRESSIONAL STAFFDEL A CANNED VERSION OF CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S LINE WITH SCOTT SIGNALS AND END TO THE PATTERN OF THE CHINESE TALKING WITH SUCH GROUPS ABOUT TAIWAN (AND THEN RATHER AMBIGUOUSLY) ONLY WHEN THEY ARE PUSHED INTO IT. EVEN SO WE WOULD LIKE TO THINK THE CHINESE INTEND THE TOUGH LANGUAGE FOR JUST A FEW INFLUENTIAL EARS -- A LITTLE EDUCATING WHERE IT COUNTS JUST NOW ON PEKING'S NOT NEW BUT NOT WELL-KNOWN EXPECTATIONS THAT THE LIBERATION OF TAIWAN WILL BE BY FORCE. THIS IS CERTAINLY ONE PURPOSE, BUT MORE DISCREET MEANS ARE AVAILABLE. THE CHINESE ARE WELL AWARE OF HOW OUR SEMI-OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS HANDLE "CONFIDENTIAL" REMARKS (CHANG'S EXPERIENCE WITH CODEL PRICE IS A RECENT EXAMPLE). THEY MUST REALIZE THE NOOSE-AND-BAYONETS IMAGE IS STRIKING ENOUGH THAT IT WILL NOT BE LONG IN FINDING ITS WAY INTO THE US MEDIA, TOGETHER WITH THE MORE GENERAL PROPOSITION THAT (IN WANG'S WORDS) "ONE DAY THERE WILL HAVE TO BE A FIGHT" TO REGAIN TAIWAN.

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PAGE 03 PEKING 01455 01 OF 02 311353Z

4. IN SUM, THEREFORE, THE CHINESE PRESUMABLY ARE PREPARED TO HAVE THEIR WORDS REACH JUST AS BIG A PUBLIC AS -- TO USE NANCY TANG'S EXAMPLES OF THE KIND OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES TO WHICH CHINA IS REACTING -- RECENT STATEMENTS ON SINO-US RELATIONS BY SENATOR GOLDWATER AND THE NEW YORK TIMES. NANCY REFRAINED FROM SAYING SO, BUT SHE MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND ALSO MR. CARTER'S

STATEMENT TO TIME (CARRIED IN NCNA'S JULY 26 "NEWS FROM FOREIGN AGENCIES AND PRESS") CALLING FOR ASSURANCES THAT TAIWAN WILL BE FREE OF MILITARY PERSUASION OR DOMINATION FROM MAINLAND CHINA.

5. WE THINK IT IS NO FEAT OF IMAGINATION TO SAY THAT THE EFFECT OF THE TOUGH CHINESE PUBLIC LINE COULD -- REPEAT COULD -- WRECK OUR CHINA POLICY. MOREOVER, IT COULD LEAD TO THE VERY OPPOSITE OF WHAT THE PRC WANTS BY SERVING TO PROMOTE A "TWO CHINAS" OR "ONE CHINA ONE TAIWAN" SITUATION. THE AMERICANS WHO CARRIED INTO THE MEETINGS WITH CHANG AND WANG THE ASSUMPTIONS THAT CHINA IS PATIENT AND CHINA ENVISAGES A PEACEFUL SOLUTION LEFT THE MEETINGS IN VARYING DEGREES OF SHOCK. REMARKS SEVERAL OF THE VISITORS MADE TO US LATER INDICATED THEY SAW ONLY BAD EFFECTS ON PRC-US RELATIONS.

6. THERE MUST BE THOSE IN CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT WHO REALIZE THIS POTENTIAL EFFECT AND MIGHT HAVE ARGUED AGAINST GOING PUBLIC WITH THE TOUGH LINE. HOWEVER, IT NOW SEEMS LIKELY THE DECISION HAD

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SECRET

PAGE 01 PEKING 01455 02 OF 02 311303Z

47

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 1455

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BEEN TAKEN BY THE TIME CHANG MET WITH SCOTT.

7. DOES THIS DECISION MEAN THAT PEKING NO LONGER SEES BILATERAL ISSUES -- AND SPECIFICALLY TAIWANHMAA IN THE TERMS HUA KUO-FENG EXPRESSED THEM TO ME, AS "MINOR ASPECTS" OF OUR RELATIONSHIP? IT COULD, THOUGH I DOUBT IT. NOR DO I THINK THE CHINESE HAVE CAST AWAY THE

APPRECIATION OF THEIR BASIC SELF-INTEREST THAT BROUGHT THEM INTO THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH US IN THE FIRST PLACE. AS I SHALL NOTE AGAIN LATER, THESE ARE POINTS WE SHOULD BE AUTHORITATIVELY CLARIFIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT ASSUMING ESSENTIALLY THE SAME OVER-ALL CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT THE LEADERSHIP IS GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT THE US MAY BACKTRACK ON TAIWAN, AND PERHAPS IRRITATED AT THE PROSPECT THAT COLLECTING THE "DEBT" WILL TAKE MUCH LONGER THAN ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED. THEY MAY ESTIMATE THAT THEY CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, OR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, AT LITTLE RISK TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE US/PRC RELATIONSHIP, IN PART BY STIMULATING SUPPORT IN THE US FOR THE VIEWPOINT EXPRESSED IN THE JULY 26 BALTIMORE SUN "THE CHINA BULLET" EDITORIAL. (THIS WAS CARRIED IN THE JULY 27 "NEWS FROM FOREIGN AGENCIES AND POSTS".) AND THEY MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT, IN ANY EVENT, IT IS TIME TO INTRODUCE GREATER "REALISM" IN THE WAY US PUBLIC OPINION WEIGHS RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN AS AGAINST THOSE WITH THE PRC.

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PAGE 02 PEKING 01455 02 OF 02 311303Z

8. WE SUSPECT THERE ARE ALSO INTERNAL FACTORS. THE DOMESTIC CONSENSUS IN THE PRC THAT PERMITTED THE NEW US-CHINA RELATIONSHIP TO BEGIN MAY HAVE RESTED IN PART ON AN EXPECTATION THE US WOULD IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME END ITS MILITARY INVOLVEMENT WITH TAIWAN. THERE COULD BE PRESSURES ON HUA AND CHANG FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY, FOR EXAMPLE, TO ENSURE AT LEAST THAT US FAILURE TO DO SO IS NOT A PRODUCT OF INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION. OR CHANG, FOR ONE, COULD BE USING A MILITANT LINE ON TAIWAN'S RECOVERY AS A MEANS OF STIMULATING XENOPHOBIC SUPPORT IN THE PLA. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT CHANG COULD HAVE SPOKEN AS HE DID TO SCOTT (AND THEN WANG TO THE STAFFDEL) WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE REST OF THE TOP LEADERSHIP.

9. THE US CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDABLY EXPECT SOME FORM OF REASONABLE ASSURANCE THAT TAIWAN WILL NOT FALL VICTIM TO PEKING UPON OUR BREAKING RELATIONS. CHANG'S AND WANG'S COMMENTS TO SCOTT AND THE STAFFDEL CLEARLY WILL MAKE SUCH ASSURANCE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. WE SHOULD QUIETLY TAKE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE THE CHINESE REAFFIRM THE PRIORITIES WE HAVE AGREED TO IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. THEN WE SHOULD NOTE, IF ONLY FOR THE RECORD, THAT REGARDLESS OF THEIR PURPOSE AND MOTIVATION COMMENTS SUCH AS CHANG'S TO SCOTT WILL HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON THE PROGRESS OF NORMALIZATION -- IN FACT COULD

WIRE IT FOR SELF-DESTRUCT. YOUR FORTHCOMING MEETING
WITH CHIAO KUAN-HUA AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK
MAY BE THE FIRST SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY ALTHOUGH I AM
CONCERNED THAT BY THEN MOST OF THE DAMAGE WILL ALREADY
HAVE BEEN DONE BY PUBLICITY FOR CHANG'S AND OR WANG'S
REMARKS ABOUT MILITARY LIBERATION OF TAIWAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL REVERSION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLICIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CA T-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PEKING01455
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840090-1861
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976071/aaaaaatq.tel
Line Count: 230
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS; EXDIS
Reference: 76 PEKING 1429
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <17 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE "CHANG CHUN-CHIAO LINE"
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, CH, US, TW, (SCOTT, HUGH), (CHANG CHUN-CHIAO), (WANG HAI-JUNG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006